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Journey is dedicated to all who are or will be awakened.
May you forever BE in the light and love of the creator.

Walk your own path!
Ruth

Jessie Traynor sat cross-legged on the floor of the small cabin she had rented. Outside, cold rain fell softly through the massive trees that made up the dense forest canopy. Staring into the hypnotic fire, she pondered the questions that ran through her tired brain. Foremost among them was—who was she? Jessie knew what she had been—a teacher for many years, a student of ancient history and languages, an artist, a writer, a Reiki energy master, but none of these was who she was. All of her accomplishments, all of her awards were dust in her mouth. Burned out and disillusioned with life, Jessie had retired early from teaching, had sold most of her belongings and had moved to the Olympic Peninsula of Washington state—seeking. Seeking what? The woman only knew that her soul felt at home here—at peace. For the present, that was all that mattered. At fifty-three, she was tired of doing. She only wanted to be—just be—for even a little while.

Absently, Jessie reached for a small jar of wild honey on the floor next to her. Drizzling a bit of its sweetness into her blackberry tea, she sighed. Maybe it was time to journey. Tonight was the blue moon—a rare occurrence when a second full moon happened in the same month. What better time would there be? She would finish her tea and prepare.

Although Jessie had been trained to journey in the traditional Native American style, she seldom adhered to it. Instead of drumming, she used her affinity for the energy of quartz crystals to propel her into trance. After smudging the cabin and herself, she reverently laid out the crystal circle. Twelve hand sized quartz points—some clear, some with milky swirls—one at each number of an invisible clock—all points facing outward, double terminated crystals at the twelve and six o'clock positions. Next came two thick hand made quilts laid on the floor inside the circle—not so much for padding as for the warmth they would afford.

After building up the fire and pulling the protective screen across the opening, Jessie stepped into the circle carrying two more quilts and her personal crystal—a narrow, foot long, water clear generator point covered in record keepers. Kneeling, she slipped the thong of her medicine bag around her neck, sealed the circle with light energy and lay back on the floor. Covering herself to the chin with the remaining quilts, Jessie held her crystal close to her heart. Head at the twelve o'clock position, feet toward the six, she began her prayers.

“Mother/father God, Great Spirit, guardian angels and ascended masters . . .” the woman began, thanking them for their presence, asking for their protection and guidance. Next she called her personal angels who often took the form of animals on her journeys into the land of spirit. Native Americans called them “power animals”. To Jessie, they were close friends and guardians in a sometime hostile land. Requesting that her guides take her wherever she needed to go to find the answers she sought, the woman entered her journey trance. Heavy clothing, quilts, cabin, fire—even her body itself all dissolved from consciousness as her mind and spirit began racing down the familiar opening in the earth. Faster and faster she flew like a runaway mining car on an endless track until, with a

burst of brilliant light, she emerged into total darkness—and silence. Nothingness—a timeless void. Breathing deeply and evenly, she waited.

One at a time, tiny points of light began to glow until Jessie saw that she was in a womb-like cavern of black crystal. A single point of light began to pulse soft blue and she sensed a sentient presence. Telepathically it spoke to her.

“Greetings, Seeker.”

“Greetings,” she replied.

Silence.

“Where am I?” she ventured.

“Between.”

“Between?”

“Between that which is and was and may yet be.”

Silence again.

“Why?”

“The portal is here. —Will you seek alone?”

“Alone?” A small fear flickered. Jessie had never journeyed without her guides and protectors. As if sensing her hesitation, the being continued,

“Where you seek, the veil is dense. Communication with guides is difficult and often impossible.”

Silence fell between them as the woman contemplated this thought. Searching the essence of the being, she found only love and compassion. It meant her no harm—and her guides HAD brought her here.

“Will you seek alone?” it asked again, the pulsing changing to a more brilliant blue tinged with lavender.

Centering herself and quenching her fear, she replied, *“Yes, I will seek alone.”*

“Step into the light.”

Taking a deep breath, Jessie entered the vortex of crystalline energy that materialized before her. Nausea flooded her being as every molecule seemed wrenched apart. After what felt like eternity, the world finally righted itself and she lost consciousness.

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As the darkness receded and she became more aware of her surroundings, Jessie’s first thought was that never, in all of her journeying experiences, had there ever been one that even faintly resembled what she had just been through. The most horrific headache she had ever encountered now ate at her brain and every muscle ached.

Since she was lying face down in the dirt, Jessie slowly rolled to her side and gingerly raised herself to a sitting position. Bad choice. Her head started spinning again. What was going on?

When the urge to vomit and curl into a fetal position finally passed, Jessie painfully opened her eyes just a crack. And then opened them wide! Not only was

she not in any locale that she could readily identify, she was no longer in HER body! The skin she now inhabited was at least fifty pounds thinner and about twenty-five years younger. Her new hands went to the hair that hung to her waist. Carefully she pulled a strand around to look at it. Dark brown—almost black—thick and shiny with a slight wave to it.

Further investigation revealed that she was now wearing some sort of full-length tunic made of lightweight homespun fabric. Beige would not have been her first color choice, but then again neither would the heavier dark brown outer robe or the crude sandals on her otherwise bare feet.

Opening the leather bag tied to a sash at her waist, Jessie discovered a smaller version of her personal crystal, some sort of dried fruit and a three to four ounce stoppered bottle made of alabaster. Carefully she opened it and inhaled. Pure oil of myrrh! Replacing the bottle, she dug into the bottom of the bag and pulled out a few small coins that seemed vaguely familiar.

A cold chill ran down the woman's spine as she realized she was holding a much younger version of the ancient Roman coins she had seen in the university museum. Stunned, Jessie realized that, somehow, she had actually been catapulted back through time but, exactly where was she—and when?

Collecting her energy, Jessie reached out toward her spirit guides. Nothing! What was it the being in the cave had said? The veil would be thicker here? OK, no guides for the moment. How about accessing the Reiki energy? Hopefully, the woman reached out to the universal healing energy she had used many times in her life and gratefully connected. Allowing its comfort to wash over and through her, she relaxed as the headache faded away.

Feeling much better and a bit hungry, Jessie placed one of the pieces of dried fruit into her mouth. It was sweet and chewy and very filling. Now if she only had some water!

Getting to her feet, the woman looked around the countryside. She could not just stay here in the middle of the road, but which way should she go? The noon-day sun beat down mercilessly. Sighing, Jessie Traynor pulled the hood of her robe over her head and started walking in what she hoped was the right direction.

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As the portal opened and the woman moved through time, the teacher felt the shift in the energy. *So, she has chosen to come*, he noted. *Not the smoothest crossing*, he mused with a small smile as he sensed her abrupt landing, *but she has probably forgotten how to time travel in her present life. At least she is here. All help with the task ahead is appreciated.*

Knowing they would soon meet, he returned to his meditation.

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I sure hope this body knows where it's going. Jessie thought as she hiked up yet another hill. She had thrown back her hood in hopes that the slight breeze would dry her sweat soaked hair before she actually met someone. How did people survive in this heat?

She stopped suddenly. Maybe she had not seen anyone because they were resting.

Spying a copse of trees not far from her, Jessie decided a nap was in order. Gratefully she left the dusty road and strolled through the thick grass, relishing its coolness on her tired ankles. Reaching the trees, she removed her outer robe and sandals. Finger combing her hair, she then plaited it into one long braid and tied it with a string from her sash. There! That was better already! Next, she rolled up the robe with her sandals inside. With a sigh, she lay down with her makeshift pillow and was soon asleep.

High above her, a seven-year-old boy sat hidden in the branches, his short legs swinging back and forth beneath his leafy perch. He hated herding those smelly goats and sheep and had run off again while the older boys were resting. Why did he have to watch the animals? He would much rather make things out of the smooth river clay. Mama had admired the small things he had crafted, but had still sent him out to tend the flock with his brothers. It just wasn't fair!

Again he peeked down at the sleeping form below him. Who was this beautiful lady with the light skin and eyes the color of the sky? He had never seen anyone like her. Was she lost? It wasn't safe for a woman to be out alone so far from town. His mama had said so. Too many bad soldiers around. Well, he would keep watch over her. If he was old enough to herd sheep, he could protect this lady. Taking a drink from his water bag, he straddled the limb and leaned his dark curly head back against the massive trunk to wait.

Jessie was roused from deep sleep by a pulling on her sleeve and a soft whisper near her ear.

"Lady—Lady, we need to go. Lady?"

Groaning softly, she opened her eyes and saw a small dirty face staring at her. Startled, she pulled back. The language seemed familiar—a form of Aramaic. Concentrating, she understood, both from her schooling and from some inborn knowledge her present body possessed.

"Lady? You awake now? We need to go. Soldiers coming! We need to hide." *Soldiers? Hide? Wake up, Jessie!* Shaking her head, she sat up.

"What soldiers?" she whispered, grabbing her robe and sandals.

"Bad soldiers, Lady. Come with me."

Taking her by the hand, the boy led her to some heavy brush nearby. Parting the branches, he motioned her inside. There was barely enough room for the two of them, but he urged her to lie flat on the ground. A grubby finger against her lips warned her to silence and none too soon.

With a jingle of harness, four mounted soldiers appeared on the road. Jessie

stared at their uniforms. *Definitely Roman*, she thought, turning her head to the boy. He motioned for her to stay down and flattened his small body even closer to the ground. Suddenly grateful for the muted tones of her clothing, Jessie did the same. Together they hugged the earth until all sound of the soldiers' passing had faded. Finally, the boy raised his head and looked around. Quietly he whispered into Jessie's ear.

"We go, Lady. No noise. Follow me."

Filled with questions, Jessie bowed to his young wisdom and nodded her agreement.

As quietly as possible, the ever alert boy led the way, weaving between trees and brush, at times crouching through tall grass. Jessie did her best to imitate his movements. Eventually they emerged on the edge of a village where her young guide turned and announced,

"We're safe now, Lady."

Breathing a sigh of relief, Jessie replied, "Thank you!"

The boy's brow suddenly furrowed. Putting small fists on his slender hips, he looked up at her.

"Why are you out alone?"

Unable to come up with a plausible excuse, Jessie countered, "How did you know about the soldiers?"

"I hid in the tree—very high up. I can see far away."

"Why were you hiding?"

The boy looked down and ground a bare toe into the dirt.

"Are you in trouble?"

Tears welled in the dark eyes.

"It's OK. Can I help?"

The boy slowly shook his head, his lower lip quivering. Jessie leaned over and hugged him.

"What's your name?" she asked with a smile.

"Benjamin."

"Do you live here, Benjamin?"

"Me and mama and my brothers live over there," he replied, pointing to a small earth and stone home nearby.

"And your father?"

Tears now flowed freely down the dusty face. Benjamin wiped them with his sleeve. "Bad soldiers hurt him. He died." Jessie was at a loss for words. Looking up, the youngster sniffled and then asked, "Are you hungry?"

"Yes, I am. Thirsty, too."

"Come." Taking her hand, he led her toward his home.

"Mama!" Benjamin called out as he entered the low doorway. The woman looked away from her loom, startled to see her youngest child.

"Benjamin! What are you doing here? Is there trouble with the flock? Where

are your brothers?" Seeing his downcast eyes, she calmed. "Oh, Benjie, did you run away again?"

"Mama, I hate those smelly animals," he complained.

"But, Benjamin, those 'smelly animals' give us wool and milk and meat. You should be grateful for them," she replied, hugging the dirty form tightly. Seeing the human shadow outside her door, she quickly pulled the boy behind her. "Who's there?" she called.

Benjamin squirmed free of her grasp and ran to the door. "It's all right." Calling to his guest, he said, "Come and meet my mama, Lady."

Hesitantly, Jessie ducked into the doorway, entered the room and noted its spartan contents. A few pottery dishes and cups sat on a shelf; woven sleeping mats were rolled and piled in one corner. As her eyes adjusted to the dimmer interior, she noticed the wooden table standing to one side, two low benches beneath it. The dirt floor was covered with rushes mixed with fragrant herbs. A well-used loom stood near the open window, the pattern of the cloth already taking shape. Beige and cocoa brown, she noted.

"Who is this, Benjie?" the woman questioned, her dark eyes suspicious.

"A beautiful lady, Mama. I found her and we are hungry."

"What do you mean you 'found her'?"

"He means," Jessie explained, "that he is a very brave boy who helped a stranger avoid some 'bad soldiers' as he put it."

The lines on the woman's tired face deepened as she turned to her son. "Benjamin, why were you near the soldiers?"

Proudly the young hero recounted the story. When he finished, the boy looked up at his mother and beamed. She relaxed and walked across the room to him.

"Benjie, go and draw fresh water for our guest." The boy grinned, grabbed the jug she held out to him and dashed out of the door. His mother smiled and shook her head.

Reaching up to a shelf, she took down two cups and carried them to the table. Looking over her shoulder, she offered, "I am Rebecca of Bethany." Uncovering a woven basket, she removed a small loaf of bread and placed it on a cloth napkin. "What are you called?"

Deciding that truth would be best where she could use it, Jessie replied, "I am Jessie of—America."

"I have never heard of this America. Is it far?"

"Many days journey across the sea."

"What brings you here?"

"We came seeking a new life," Jessie hedged, trying to think on her feet. *Not a time for total truth!*

"We?"

"My brother," she improvised quickly.

"Where is he now?"

Down casting her eyes, she replied, "He became ill and died."

"Forgive my questions. You must be tired," Rebecca responded. Her heart went out to the younger woman. Motioning to one of the benches, she added, "Please, sit."

Gratefully, Jessie sat.

"We have no servant, so I will bathe the dust from your feet," Rebecca offered. Jessie started to protest that it was not necessary when she remembered the Jewish hospitality ritual.

"Thank you," she replied and allowed the woman to minister to her needs.

"Benjamin will be back soon with cool water from the well. I can offer you bread, fresh olives and cheese."

"Bless you!" Jessie replied, the mere thought of food and water making her stomach rumble with anticipation.

After washing her guest's feet, Rebecca poured more water over Jessie's hands, gave her a towel, and walked to the open doorway to empty the basin.

As Jessie heard the water strike the hard packed earth, hard *facts* struck her with even greater force. She had to be in ancient Palestine. But, why? What answers were here?

Jessie's thoughts were interrupted when the bubbling youngster ran into the house and placed his precious burden on the table before her. Rebecca looked down at her son's sweat-streaked face.

"Wash and you may join Jessie," she offered, tousling his short curls.

"Jessie?"

"Yes, Benjamin. That is our guest's name."

"It's a wonderful name," he smiled and ran to do his mother's bidding.

And so it was that Jessie Traynor came to live with Rebecca and her three sons in the village of Bethany. Knowing her few coins would not stretch far and wanting to bring a little income to this family as well, Jessie offered to make pottery—the one ancient craft she knew well. Rebecca at first declined, but seeing her guest was determined, she relented and introduced her to Hiram.

Staring at the foreign woman before him, the local potter absently stroked his graying beard. The short, wiry man furrowed his wrinkled brow and asked gruffly, "What makes you believe you can form clay?"

Oh, if you only knew, Jessie smiled inwardly as she answered humbly, "In my country I have some small skill. May I try?"

Hiram grunted and gestured toward the crude potter's wheel. Gathering her skirts, Jessie sat down, dipped her hands into the bowl of water on the workbench and began to wedge a lump of coarse clay she took from the covered bucket. Again and again she squished, rolled and pounded, driving the air bubbles from it until she was satisfied with its consistency. After centering the clay, she propelled the wheel with her foot. Dipping her hands once again into the water, she leaned over. One hand steadied the clay while the other pressed into it from the top. Gradually the pot took form. *Keep it simple*, Jessie reminded herself. In a few

moments, a serviceable water jug spun lazily on the slowing wheel. Raising her deep blue eyes as if asking approval, she silently looked at Hiram. The expression on his face was priceless, but she pretended not to notice. Regaining his composure, he flatly announced to the air, "It will do." Turning back to her, he admonished sternly, "It is unseemly for a woman to work outside of the family home."

"Jessie is alone in our land as you know, Hiram, and customs in her country may not be as ours," Rebecca commented. With a sideways glance to the heavily pregnant woman standing in the doorway, she added, "Surely your wife will be grateful for the help until her child is born?"

Seeing the wisdom of her suggestion, the potter relented.

"Very well."

Arrangements were made and Jessie's career began with lessons in the gathering of local materials.

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Benjamin watched from afar whenever he could steal away from his herding. Maybe Jessie would let him help? After all, the clay buckets were heavy and the riverbanks muddy. Maybe if he gathered the raw clay, she would teach him to make pots and then he would not have to watch sheep. He would get up early tomorrow and surprise her by having her buckets filled when she arrived at the river. Then he would ask her. With a determined smile, he returned to his brothers and their small flock.

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A sense of impending doom snapped Jessie awake. Anxiously, she scanned the room. Where was Benjamin? Gently she shook Rebecca's eldest son on the next sleeping mat. "Daniel. Daniel, wake up!" she whispered loudly. The young teenager rolled over sleepily. "Daniel, Benjamin is in danger."

"What danger?" the lanky boy asked, suddenly awake.

"I don't know. He's gone."

"Probably just relieving himself," the young man whispered through a yawn as he lay back down.

"No! He's in trouble. We need to go now!"

Searching for his outer robe in the darkened room, Daniel left the house to find Jessie standing outside, silently staring at nothing, her sleep-tangled hair tumbling over her shoulders. Suddenly she clutched at her heart. *Oh, God, NO!* she silently screamed. Turning to Daniel she shouted, "The river! RUN!"

False dawn gave feeble light as they ran hard, Jessie wide eyed with terror, Daniel totally confused. Nearing the river's banks they heard splashing and a feeble cry. Jessie hitched up her skirts and lengthened her barefooted strides, Daniel right beside her. "Benjie can't swim!" he shouted and then added, "Neither can I."

Jessie shed her outer robe as she ran and hit the water in a racer's dive. Coming up for air, she took a quick breath and dove again. Through the churning water she spied fabric, grabbed it and kicked toward the surface. Fighting the current, she swam, towing the still form behind her. Dragging them both onto the steep bank, she called out, "Here, take him!"

Daniel pulled his brother to safety while Jessie levered herself out of the river. "Is he breathing?" she asked as she knelt over Benjamin, water pooling around them from sodden garments.

"No. I think he's . . . he's . . . oh, what will mother do now?"

Jessie pressed her fingers to the carotid artery and got a faint pulse. Without thinking, she instinctively began life saving techniques from her time, an open mouthed Daniel staring at her movements.

"Come on, Benjie," she begged between breaths. Sensing the presence of the boy's spirit hovering above her, Jessie's consciousness split. One part of her continued the life saving technique, while another reached out to his essence.

"Hi, Benjie."

"Hi, Jessie. Are you surprised? I got you some clay—but the ground was slippery and—I fell."

"It's OK."

"I feel strange, Jessie. Like I'm way up in a really high tree and the ground is far far away."

"Benjie, listen to me. We can't stay here. Daniel is waiting. We need to go home to your mama."

"I just want to fly away—like a bird!"

"No! Benjie, stay with me!" Jessie ordered sharply, paused, and then continued softly. "Benjie."

"Are you mad at me, Jessie? I just wanted to surprise you."

"No, I'm not mad—and I am surprised—and pleased. Benjie, I have an idea. Come back with me and I'll ask your mama if you can apprentice with Hiram. If she says yes then there'll be no more smelly animals for you to herd."

"Will you teach me to make pots, too?"

"Of course. Are you ready?"

"Yes. I want to go home to Mama."

Jessie pulled back just in time to avoid the water that Benjamin vomited. Quickly, she turned his head to avoid aspiration and watched as he took one short breath, vomited, then took another. Coughing, then gasping, he finally opened his eyes. After a few more ragged breaths, he rolled over onto his side and breathed deeply.

"You're going to be OK, Benjie," Jessie announced to the now shivering boy. Still watching the child, she called out to Daniel, "Hand me a robe. We need to get him warm." When no robe came, she turned her head and was greeted by the shocked stares of Benjamin's family and several of the villagers.

"Sorcery!" cried one woman, clutching her head covering tightly beneath her

throat. Others murmured and drew apart, shaking their heads.

"What I did was no sorcery," Jessie stated flatly, getting to her feet, her hair and clothing still dripping water. Rebecca brushed past her, threw herself to the ground and clasped Benjamin to her breast.

"No!" she cried loudly. "My son has been returned to me. It's a miracle!"

"A miracle," someone agreed softly.

"Yes, like Lazarus," added another.

"Mama, I'm cold," Benjamin interrupted, "...and hungry! Can we go home now?"

Soft laughter rippled through the crowd. They parted to allow the family and Jessie to return to the village. There would be fuel for gossip today!

Daniel gathered up his brother, wrapped him in a dry robe and carried him to the house. Jessie followed, her outer robe thrown over her clammy gown, the hood pulled over her wet hair.

Once home, a fire was built and the two wet humans placed before it. Rebecca reached into a carved wooden trunk, removed a gown and handed it to Jessie. Taking charge of Benjamin, she then shooed Daniel and Aaron outside to gather more wood and milk the goats.

"Now you can change in peace," she commented.

After donning the dry garment, Jessie stroked the material. The pale cream gown was of a fine weave. Delicate designs in a dark brown were embroidered around neck, cuffs and hem.

"It's beautiful."

"It's yours—with my thanks."

Rebecca set about preparing a simple breakfast while Jessie rubbed at her damp hair before the fire. The older boys returned from their chores and began to pamper their little brother. Daniel wrapped him in a warm blanket and then, while Aaron towed his hair, he fetched Benjamin a cup of foaming goat's milk from the jug on the table. The youngster responded to all of this attention with unusual calm.

Having been excused from herding, Benjamin grinned smugly from his nest by the fire as his brothers led their bleating flock out of the village and onto the grassy hillsides nearby. When they had gone, he whispered to Jessie, "Remember your promise."

"You rest. I'll talk to your mother." The boy yawned and snuggled into the blankets.

"What are you two whispering about?" Rebecca asked, sitting down at her loom. Jessie sat on a stool beside her.

"Would you consider letting Benjamin apprentice with Hiram?" she began softly. Rebecca's body went stiff, her mouth a tight line. Jessie continued gently, "He loves to work with the clay and it would be a good trade when he is older."

"Our men have always herded sheep and goats. Our women spin and weave," Rebecca countered.

"Perhaps it is time for new traditions? Hiram is past his prime. No child of his lives. By the time his new wife births this babe and it grows to a trainable age, Hiram may not have the strength to spin the wheel or draw the clay. And, Benjamin so loves it."

"He almost died gathering clay today!" Rebecca retorted loudly. "I'm sorry. I shouldn't have shouted, but I will not lose him to the river."

"Or to the soldiers? Or to life? Rebecca, would you keep him a child forever?"

"No," came the sobbed reply. Jessica leaned over and gathered the woman into an embrace. Murmuring soft reassurances, she let her friend cry.

"I will see he learns to swim. Hiram will not risk him unnecessarily. Can the boy at least try?"

Looking over at the now sleeping form of her son, Rebecca silently nodded.

The moment was interrupted by a knock at the doorway. Wiping her eyes on her sleeve, Rebecca called out, "Who is it?"

"It's Mary. May I come in?"

"Yes, of course."

Jessie looked over as their guest entered. The young woman was plump and rosy cheeked, her dark chocolate eyes framed by wavy brown hair that glinted with auburn highlights.

"Sit, please. May I offer refreshment?" Rebecca prompted.

"Just some water, thank you."

Rebecca poured fresh water into a cup and handed it to Mary. "Have you met my guest?"

"No, we just returned from a short journey. One of my sister's friends told her of the excitement only a few moments ago. How is your son?"

"Benjamin is fine," Rebecca answered. Turning, she added, "and this is Jessie."

After exchanging pleasantries, Mary asked, "So, what DID you do to save the boy?"

"Just something that is common knowledge in my country."

"People are claiming it was a miracle."

"The miracle was that I arrived in time to help," Jessie replied.

"Mary's brother, Lazarus, was also raised from the dead," Rebecca interjected, "by Yeshua."

"Yeshua?" Jessie asked, startled. *Could it be?* "Yeshua of Nazareth?"

"Yes! Have you met him?" Mary inquired brightly.

"No. I've just heard of him," Jessie explained. "So, he raised your brother?"

"Yes, Yeshua is greatly favored with the power of the most high."

Jessie's mind was churning. *Yeshua! THE Yeshua!* Almost shyly she asked, "Is there a chance I could meet him?"

"Certainly," Mary replied with a small laugh. "He comes here often."

"When?"

"You are anxious to meet him?"

"No—well, yes—well—I . . ." Jessie stumbled.

Mary looked over at Rebecca and smiled widely.

"What?" Jessie asked in confusion.

"Forgive us," Rebecca laughed, covering her mouth with her hand.

Mary explained, "It's not uncommon for people to want to be in Yeshua's presence, but that doesn't usually happen until after they meet him."

"Oh."

"Do not be concerned. My family and Rebecca's love him. He gives so much and asks nothing in return. So we offer him a haven—a quiet time—away from most of his followers, away from the crowds who want his healing touch. A place where he can relax and just 'be' for a while," Mary continued.

Just 'be' for a while, Jessie thought, remembering her deep longing for this very thing.

"We've had word that he should arrive tomorrow toward evening," Mary added. "Come for supper."

"I won't intrude?"

"No one is an intrusion to Yeshua," Mary assured getting to her feet. "I must go. My sister, Martha, is in a frenzy of preparations."

After Mary left, Jessie turned to Rebecca. "Are you and the boys coming too?"

"No. Mary meant for just you to come. We will meet with him later." Seeing the almost panicked look in Jessie's eyes, she added, "You will be fine. It is easy to talk with Yeshua."

The next twenty-four hours both dragged and flew for Jessie. First, she went to Hiram with her idea. He blustered a bit and then agreed. Benjamin was a likeable child and the art of clay must be passed on. When Jessie gave him the news, Benjie shrieked with joy, hugged her soundly and ran to tell his brothers of his good fortune.

Upon his return, Jessie sat down with Benjamin in the pottery shop and showed him how to form pinch pots. Watching his small hands shaping the clay, she knew he would be good at this work. The boy smiled as his fingers pushed and smoothed, occasionally looking up for approval. Jessie nodded encouragement, made a few suggestions, but, mostly, just enjoyed seeing him create. Hiram, too, nodded as he watched. This one would be worth the time and training. Later, the boy could be taught to make pots from smooth coils of clay overlaid with earth paste. When he was taller and his muscles stronger, he could learn the art of the wheel. Yes, the foreign woman was right. This child was a blessing.

Sleep all but eluded Jessie that night. Her mind raced with questions and possibilities. Her stomach knotted, relaxed and knotted again. Finally she sighed, freed her mind and drifted to sleep.

The next morning, Jessie decided on a bath. A quick splash in a basin was one

thing, but a good scrubbing was now in order. Getting the necessary items from Rebecca, she went to the women's secluded bathing area and took her time. Her travel tunic was dry so she put it on and aired out the new one. Borrowing a comb from her hostess, she fluffed and dried her newly washed hair before twisting it into a braid. *Goodness*, she thought, *I'm acting like a girl getting ready for her first date!*

Jessie was so distracted that her efforts at housework were clumsy at best. Towards evening, Rebecca shook her head and politely suggested,

"Why don't you walk in the olive grove and gather your thoughts? We will come for you when it's time."

Quickly changing into her new gown, Jessie hesitated and then dabbed a small drop of myrrh oil into the cleft between her breasts. Patting her braid, she wished for a mirror and sighed. Swinging the new cream head cloth Rebecca had given her around her shoulders, Jessie murmured her thanks and left the house.

Strolling through the trees did settle Jessie's nerves. Finding a smooth flat rock, she sat down to meditate. The warm breeze flowed over her, carrying the head cloth to the ground behind her. Eyes closed, her breathing slowed and deepened. The trees whispered in the wind; insects sang. In the distance, Jessie could hear the flocks returning with their shepherds, other voices drifting up from the village below. For these few moments she allowed herself to simply be, to float upon the currents of energy that swirled and played. Life was good—even in this ancient land.

In the midst of her meditation, Jessie sensed a powerful presence. Slowly she opened her eyes. Before her stood the most beautiful human she had ever seen. His aura was breathtaking, almost blindingly so. With merriment in his eyes, he grounded the energy until the light became a soft shimmer.

"Better?" The deep voice was like liquid silk.

"Much. Thanks."

"Let your light shine, but don't blind them, eh? I sometimes forget there are those who can see auras in this dense age."

Jessie sat and stared at the tall, solidly built man. *Yeshua!*

"May I sit?" he asked.

"Of course," she replied, scooting over to make room on the rock. He sat facing her, rich brown hair falling forward over his broad shoulders.

"I'm . . ."

"I know who you are, Jessie, and where, or should I say when you are from." *Why did that not surprise her?*

"I'm glad you chose to come," he added.

Jessie took a sudden deep breath and exhaled, still in awe of the energy emanating from his being. Gently Yeshua traced her jaw with his fingertips, the touch feather light.

"Questions upon questions and what to ask first," he commented. Reaching behind the rock, he retrieved her head cloth. "I believe we should return to the

village. Mary was going to send Benjamin to fetch you, but I persuaded her that we needed a minute to meet first.” Getting to his feet, he reached for her hand and helped her up. Jessie took the cloth and placed it over her hair. As they walked down the hillside, Yeshua added, “The scent of myrrh is so refreshing.” Jessie lowered her eyes and blushed.

The rest of the evening passed in a pleasantness of conversation, tasty food and warm friendship. Jessie fell into the relaxed atmosphere and was soon laughing and talking with the others well into the night. Rebecca was right. Yeshua was easy to be with. She would discard all of her previous ideas and experience this man for the person he was. He had been right about her many questions, but they could wait. Tonight was a time to just *be*.

Jessie was awakened at sunrise by an excited Benjamin pulling on her sleeve. “Jessie! Jessie! You said you would teach me to swim today!” he whispered loudly.

I did? Oh, mercy, I did.

“It’s early, Benjie. Can’t we do it later?” Jessie mumbled. The boy rocked back on his haunches, a look of disappointment clouding his face.

“Oh, all right,” she conceded, rolling over, her eyes not quite ready to focus. Rubbing the sleep from them, Jessie had a sudden desperate longing for a large cup of coffee. There were some things she missed from her time: hot showers, toothpaste, deodorant, indoor plumbing, a comfy bed—and a great cup of wake-me-up mocha coffee complete with a heaping spoonful of honey and a large splash of French vanilla flavored cream. Oh well, when in Rome . . . or Palestine . . . or wherever.

“Where is your family?” she asked, noticing the empty room.

“It was hot so they slept on the roof. Do you want water or goat’s milk?” Benjamin asked softly, heading for the table.

Ugh. Neither.

“Water—and don’t eat much this morning, OK?”

“Why?”

“It’s just not a great idea before swimming.”

“OK.” The boy split a flat bread cake in half and held one end out to her. Resigning herself to no coffee, Jessie ate while Benjamin chattered as only a seven-year-old can do.

Wearing her old gown belted to her narrow waist, her hair combed and freshly braided, Jessie started out toward the river, Benjie close beside. She had chosen a quieter area for his lesson—an area where the current was slow, where the boy could learn to float and then to swim with confidence. Jessie just wished she had her swimsuit. This would be awkward in her full-length tunic. She was trying to figure a way to tie up the gown into pants when a voice called from behind them.

"Where are you two going on such a fine morning?"

Jessie's heart leaped into her throat. Benjie turned and ran back toward the speaker.

"Yeshua! Jessie is going to teach me to swim!"

"And a great day it is for swimming!"

"You know how to swim?" asked the wide-eyed boy.

"Certainly, and soon you will, too."

Yeshua grabbed Benjamin and swung the boy up into the air and onto his shoulders.

"Will you teach me, too?"

"If Jessie wants some help, yes," Yeshua agreed.

Throwing her hands up as if in surrender, Jessie explained, "Hey, I just promised your mother you would learn. Who teaches you is not important." Personally, she was glad for the reprieve.

"All right, then, it'll be just us men in the water," Yeshua stated with a wink. When Jessie tried to return to the village, Benjamin insisted she stay and watch him swim. Yeshua just smiled and shrugged.

Reaching the water's edge, Jessie seated herself in the shade of the few trees along the bank.

"First thing, Benjamin, is to rid ourselves of these clothes," Yeshua stated, swinging the boy to the ground.

Oh—my—goodness! Jessie thought, preparing to cover her eyes. That was another thing she missed—underwear! Without hesitation, the two males pulled their tunics up and over their heads. Jessie was relieved to see that both wore loincloths. Before she could breathe again, Yeshua stepped into the water.

"Now watch," he suggested. Benjamin watched his technique; Jessie watched him. Watched as his hard muscled form slid beneath the water. Watched as his long arms created ripples in the surface. Watched as his powerful legs propelled him around and around in lazy circles. Watched as his muscles flexed when he treaded water. Watched as he flung the water from his hair, droplets sparkling like crystal on his short beard and moustache.

"Now me!" Benjamin cried, running down the bank. Yeshua laughed and charged out of the river, grabbing the boy in a bear hug before he got in too far. Carrying him back to waist deep water, he gently showed him how to relax and float. Cradling Benjie's head and back in his calloused palms, Yeshua supported his form, murmuring encouragement.

"I can do it, now," Benjie insisted. Yeshua lowered his hands, letting the boy's body suspend in the water. "I'm doing it! I'm floating! Can you see me, Jessie?" he called triumphantly.

"Yes, I can. Looking good!" She smiled her thanks to Yeshua. He flashed that radiant smile in return.

Benjie was next taught a few simple strokes and was soon happily splashing his way in circles around his teacher. Noting the position of the sun, Yeshua fi-

nally called a halt to the lesson. The boy frowned, but complied and together they left the water.

"No swimming in fast current unless you fall in, agreed?" Yeshua announced as they dried themselves on the cloths handed to them. Benjie nodded, pulled his tunic on over a wet loincloth and sat on the ground.

"Hiram will be waiting to give you another clay lesson," Jessie reminded. The boy's eyes brightened.

"Want to race?" he challenged, leaping to his feet.

"You know you'd win," Jessie bantered. "Go ahead and run back. We'll be there soon." With a shout of joy, the youngster sprinted up and over the hill.

"So much energy," Jessie laughed, gathering up the wet cloth he had dropped in his haste. Turning to Yeshua, she added, "Thanks again for your help."

"Any time," he replied, toweling the remaining river water from his sun streaked hair.

"This hasn't been much of a rest for you so far," Jessie commented, reaching for the damp cloth he handed her.

Yeshua laughed. "Being with friends and away from large crowds is a rest, and I enjoyed the exercise."

"Mary says the people follow you constantly. It has to be exhausting to heal and teach so many."

"It is," he replied, a distant look crossing his face, "but time grows short." Shaking his head, he turned to Jessie. "We need to discuss those questions of yours."

"They can wait until you are rested."

"Nonsense. I will be meditating in the olive grove after the noon meal. Bring your crystal and join me," Yeshua offered.

"My crystal? How . . .how?" Jessie stammered.

"We will never finish that discussion if you keep thinking of new questions," he teasingly admonished, gold and green highlights dancing in his hazel eyes.

Yielding to a sudden playful impulse, Jessie rolled up the damp cloth, snapped it at his legs and then ran as he tried to snatch it from her. Although he could have easily overtaken her, Yeshua was content to just chase. Laughing and out of breath, they stumbled into the village.

Eyes turned to them, some disapproving, but most glad that the teacher and the foreign woman were at ease. From all around, children came running. "Yeshua! Yeshua! Tell us a story, please!" The object of their affection looked at Jessie, smiled and shrugged. "Duty calls," he announced, swinging one small one up onto his shoulders and taking another into his arms. "See you this afternoon." To the children hanging on to his robes, he suggested, "Let's get a cool drink from the well and see what story comes to mind."

As they strolled away, Jessie admired Yeshua's ease. He was as totally at home with the children as he had been with the adults last night. The very air around this man was alive with power, yet he acted as if he were no different from any

other person in the village.

Jessie sighed deeply. Turning, she walked home. There was much to do before her meeting this afternoon. It was Rebecca's night to serve the meal for Yeshua and she had agreed to help prepare the food.

While most of the villagers rested, Jessie made her way to the olive grove. Which of her many questions should she ask? And which of these should she ask first? Absently she rubbed her thumb over the crystal in her hand. She had shown it to no one, yet Yeshua had known of its existence.

Jessie sensed his presence long before she saw him. The power of Yeshua's aura pulsed through the trees and drew her like a magnet. The energy was tangible, almost sentient. It reached out to her deepest yearnings while probing her darkest secrets. Understanding washed over her. Understanding of why some loved yet others felt threatened by or even feared this man.

At last she stood before him, basking in the light of his presence, reveling in both his physical and spiritual beauty. Her questions no longer mattered. Nothing would ever matter again if she could stay in this flow of energy forever.

"You can," Yeshua stated, opening his eyes and breathing deeply.

"I can what?"

"Stay in the energy forever."

"How?"

"Open to it."

"How?"

"Jessie—it is the light of the creator, the energy of pure love. It is available to all."

"Then why don't I feel it?"

"Because you are asleep." Seeing her confusion, Yeshua held out his hands. "Journey with me."

Slipping the crystal into her sash, Jessie sat facing him on the rock. Yeshua took hold of her hands.

As their palms linked, they were transported beyond time to a place of crystalline light. A place filled with the essence of myriad souls—pieces of this light, yet sovereign unto themselves. Souls growing, maturing, learning through lifetimes of experiences on this earth and many others. Souls agreeing to incarnate, surrendering their memory of this place by passing through the veil of forgetting, some alone, others in groups, each with a chosen role to play, so all could grow. Grow toward that time when they would no longer seek experience. Toward a time when they would be content to blend with the energy of the creator.

Jessie saw souls like that of Yeshua, who chose to incarnate in an awakened state. Chose to take on the weakness of a human form and anchor the light of love, some through self-sacrifice, some through death. Avatars, ascended masters—what poor words to describe the selflessness of these beings.

The scene changed suddenly and they were in a place devoid of all light, both

physical and spiritual. Jessie shuddered, grateful for Yeshua's presence. Grateful for whatever cloaked their light from the denizens of this realm—souls who chose to forsake the light, to destroy it. There was power here, too. Strong, dark power—always hungry! It rivaled the light, sought to eclipse it. Jessie's soul recoiled in horror. The dark must not prevail!

And then . . .

They were back on the rock in the olive grove, Jessie deeply shaken.

"This is why most souls choose to be at least partially asleep when they incarnate," Yeshua explained. "It is difficult to truly remember the beauty of home and the horrors of darkness. Time has come, in this reality, to begin the awakening of this planet and its people. A time in which I have chosen to play a part.

"Very soon, I will embrace this destiny. Unfortunately, most of my male followers will scatter then, for they still fear death. Only John will stay true.

"It is the women who will stand by me in my time of trial. Female essence that has given up so much personal power to the present patriarchy so male essence may learn and grow. Women understand that the light of love must be anchored now so the pendulum of power can return to balance in a distant time when neither male nor female seeks to rule the other. But, so much lies between."

Jessie saw the farseeing look enter his eyes. Tears welled and spilled down his face as his voice took on a hollow tone.

"My soul cries for the thread I see—for those who choose to walk in darkness in that time. In MY name they will wage war. In MY name they will pillage, rape and torture. In MY name they will force the sleeping masses of humanity into oppression, ignorance, poverty and fear. Their religious councils will twist my words, keeping only those that fit their limited beliefs—discarding all others as heresy. Only those souls choosing to awaken will know the truth. As vessels of light, they will be hunted by the minions of darkness—all in MY name!"

Yeshua wept, hands covering his face. Jessie drew him close, his head on her shoulder, and held him fast.

"Then why do this?" she asked softly.

"The example of love must be made in a way humanity understands—so souls may see and remember and awaken," he replied brokenly, gently pulling from her embrace. "Mankind knows no greater love than for a friend to die in their stead. If this is such a gift to those you love, what greater example to those who hate, despise and loathe you? What better way than to honor them through the greatest sacrifice of love so they may awaken? If my death is required as the catalyst for this awakening—so be it."

Lifting his head, Yeshua looked into Jessie's eyes, his own still clouded with tears. "I came of my own free will, fully knowing every detail of what lies before me. What they will do—they do to this mortal body. My soul is forever beyond their reach."

"How can I help?" Jessie asked, tears now coursing down her face.

"Hold the energy. My spirit is willing, but human flesh is fragile—and those in

darkness will do their best to destroy this body before I can anchor the light.”

“I don’t understand.”

“In your time you use what you call Reiki,” Yeshua explained, his energy once again centered.

“You want me to send Reiki? Gladly!” Jessie agreed.

“Reiki is only a small part of the wondrous energy of pure love. Unfortunately, in your time thread, most of that was lost in the darkness I just saw. Almost everyone who knew how to tap into full creator energy was killed. A few escaped but, afraid for their lives, they failed to pass on the knowledge. Pieces have been recovered through meditation or past life memories . . .”

“Pieces?” Jessie interrupted.

“With the awakening comes great responsibility. Most will not accept this.”

Jessie raised her eyes to his. “I will,” she said softly.

Yeshua’s aura once again expanded, radiating a blinding brilliance as power flowed to and through him. Jessie’s heart beat wildly as their auras merged. Closing her eyes, she heard his faint words.

“Creator, I bring you one who would awaken.”

Gently Yeshua placed a hand on Jessie’s crown, another on her heart. The light of love for all mankind flowed through her being, almost sending her out of body. Every fiber was alive—was aglow with the energy. Time stopped. When Jessie thought she could fly no higher, he placed the heart hand on her throat. She suddenly wanted to sing, to shout, to chant, to tone. Slowly the hand moved between her eyes and she lost all touch with the earth realm.

A large faceted jewel of deepest purple appeared, its sharp point seeking to align itself with her third eye. She resisted, trying to turn away. The piercing would hurt! Did she wish this? Her ego screamed. Jessie suddenly felt like a Rubic cube that someone was trying to adjust. She fought, twisting away—and then realized it was her resistance that was causing the pain—not the alignment.

Creator, her inner being cried, I give my all to you—my worry, fear, hate, pain, joy, love. I surrender my past, my present, my future. I release my hopes, dreams, talents, my physical self, my eternal self—my ALL! I surrender totally. I am yours. Free me. Remake me. Awaken me—fully!

Suddenly she was standing in the midst of blue flames, an inferno of icy fire, coldly burning with molten energy. Her old self was purged—old goals, desires, hates, disappointments—all consumed by the purifying flames. Flames of eternal light and life and love. She became transparent, a vague outline in which inner galaxies swirled upon a background of midnight velvet. Time within time, yet timeless. Only the undefiled soul essence remained—and awareness—of many lives, many dimensions—like a kaleidoscope of hundreds of movies superimposed upon the same huge screen. Choose—choose what you wish. Choose a place, a time, a dimension. Adjust your frequency to match and it becomes your reality. If you do not like it, adjust and choose again. Leave the theater of life, return and make yet another set of choices. Learn, experience, but most of all—

awaken!

Resistance gone, the alignment became true. Slowly the radiating amethyst point pierced her spiritual skin, sank deep into her essence, anchored.

Eyes of clear gemstone were next presented. Faceted, oval replacement eyes. Eyes for true seeing. Would she surrender her earthly eyes? There was no promise that she would ever see on this plane again. Would she accept? *Yes*. Jessie felt the essence of her physical eyes removed, the very cords that bound them to her earthly mind released. Blindness—total darkness—emptiness of body and soul. Then as the jewels centered in the empty sockets, light appeared—beams of energy connecting them to each other and to the gem in her forehead. A perfect triangle—a perfect pyramid. And she saw, not only in the physical, but on the plane of spirit as well—and new knowledge flooded her being—knowledge that all of time is circular. Past, present, future all existing at once.

A gem of radiant pink edged in deepest emerald green now hovered above her chest. Her human heart was gently removed, the jewel set deeply, and her heart placed within it. Warmth of eternal love flooded her being; endless streams of light flowed through her essence, connecting her to all that is living. And all IS living in its own way. Joy flowed through her veins.

A jewel of purest crystal then seated itself in Jessie's crown. Seated deeply, pulsing as its tip touched the beams of light already present. Its energy flowed downward to the gem of rich sapphire in her throat, triggering tones of pure love—soul sounds! Orange light burst from her sacral chakra followed closely by a brilliant yellow from her solarplex. The will to live life fully, to serve mankind selflessly flowed through her. A rod of clearest ruby entered her root, shattering her being with orgasmic energy—a total release of self and an acceptance of new beginnings.

Gems of ebony appeared in her palms and feet. Gems of endless night. Gems filled with stars and galaxies yet unknown, with all that is and was and is yet to ever be. Silver light streamed from above, gold from below, all channeled through the matchless brilliance of the gem in her crown. She became a double pyramid, a Star of David, a Merkaba, spinning endlessly in all directions, yet perfectly still—aligned upon the axis of this core of central light. Old things passed away. All became new! She was reborn! She was eternal!

I AM, echoed through her brain. *I am! Ah-um! I-Ah-UM! A-u-m— a sound of creation. I-ah-um. I am one with the creator. I-ah-um.* This mantra resounded throughout her being. *I—AM!*

Her body began to vibrate faster and faster. Surely it would disintegrate from the immense flow of energy moving through it!

At the edge of consciousness, Jessie felt Yeshua connect soul star to earth star and stillness descended, the energy now a soft but constant hum, a hum that forever sang, *I AM!*

Jessie opened her eyes, gazed into his and saw the depths of Yeshua's love, his

total acceptance of her as she was. She felt whole, complete and at peace. Unable to speak, she could only feel and know.

Gently lifting his hands from her, Yeshua instructed softly, "Pass this on to those who are ready to awaken—for you can now do all that I do—and more. Minister to the people of this time and yours."

The sphere of light around them dimmed as the energy grounded, allowing their auras to separate.

"Rest now. I will stay with you," Yeshua suggested as he folded his outer robe for a pillow and helped Jessie to the ground. Wordlessly, she sank into slumber.

Timelines of possible futures flitted through Jessie's unconscious mind, along with past lives she had lived or would live between her present now and her own time. She stirred restlessly, murmuring in her sleep as memory of the cavern of black crystal returned. The portal! It was so simple to use! The awakened and those in essence form could move through both time and dimension by mere thought. Instantly—and with no crash landings! The sentient blue light shimmered and pulsed. "*Greetings, Guardian,*" she beamed and reveled in the warmth of its reply. This journey had been no accident. There were no accidents!

Opening her eyes, Jessie stared blankly as the tendrils of dream drifted from her mind. Looking up, she saw Yeshua watching her. Wordlessly, he helped her to her feet. Shaking out his robe, he draped it over his arm as Benjie emerged from the trees.

"Mama says to come and eat."

"Tomorrow?" Yeshua inquired, looking to Jessie. Unable to speak, she simply nodded.

Taking hold of one of Yeshua's hands and one of Jessie's, Benjamin walked back to the village between them.

The next morning while Yeshua took Benjamin for another swimming lesson, Jessie stayed behind in the village. Humming a light tune, she gathered her supplies. There was to be another meeting this afternoon and she had a surprise to prepare.

"What is all of this?" Yeshua laughingly inquired as Jessie set her burdens on the ground beside the meditation rock.

"You'll see," she answered trying to hide a grin.

Carefully, she folded the blanket into a square and placed it on the grass as a cushion.

"You sit here, please," she instructed. Yeshua slid from the rock to the blanket.

Jessie knelt in front of him. Taking one of his feet into her hands, she removed his sandal and placed it on the ground beside her. From her supplies, she took a basin and jug of water.

“What are you doing?” Yeshua asked as she balanced his heel in the palm of her hand.

“Combining a couple of customs,” Jessie answered as she poured water over his foot and washed it gently. From her sash, she pulled a drying cloth and carefully patted the moisture from his skin. Setting the jug and basin aside, she sat down, his foot in her lap. Yeshua leaned back against the rock, a look of amusement on his face.

Reaching into the pouch at her waist, Jessie took out a small pottery bottle. Removing the cork, she poured some of her olive oil and myrrh creation into her hand before setting the bottle aside. Briskly rubbing her palms together to warm the oil, she slid her hands over his foot.

“I believe you’ll find this scent refreshing,” she teased, her strong hands massaging the tension from his arch. “You have foot washing. My time frame has foot massage.”

She heard him sigh.

“Did you bring your crystal?” he finally asked, eyes closed.

“Yes, but we can talk later. Just enjoy.”

Taking a deep breath, Yeshua leaned his head back and surrendered to her ministrations.

After both feet had been thoroughly massaged, Jessie wiped the oil from her hands, returned her supplies to the woven bag and sat next to him.

Yeshua slowly opened his eyes. “That was wonderful. Thank you.”

“You’re welcome,” Jessie replied, leaning back against the rock.

For a few moments, they simply sat, the scent of the oil wafting through the soft breeze.

“Myrrh has so many uses,” Yeshua began, staring at the clouds drifting above them. “It can relieve some sickness. It can dull the pain of the condemned. It can be worked into funeral cloth. It . . .”

Jessie sat up, took his head in her hands and gently turned his face to hers. “There will be no talk of death today.”

Yeshua closed his eyes and took a deep breath. When she did not release him, he looked at her and replied, “Agreed.”

Jessie’s hands returned to her lap, but her eyes remained locked with his.

“You are an amazing woman, Jessie Traynor, and one that will be long remembered. Unfortunately, our present thread of time will only be known to a few. Many people in your time will remember a strong female figure from this era, but what they remember depends on which time thread they experienced. Some will know her as a strong disciple who taught many and even led a new religion, others as a prostitute I freed from the devils that plagued her. Some . . .some will even remember her as my wife.”

Yeshua fell silent and Jessie waited. Finally he reached out and took hold of the crystal she had tied with a thong so it hung like a pendant around her neck.

"A record keeper," she offered. "It can be programmed to receive information . . ."

" . . .and thoughts and memories and visual impressions . . .and scents," he added. "When you return to your time, it will be a complete recording of your life here, to be accessed at your will."

"Can anyone else retrieve the information?"

"Not from this one."

He let the pendant fall. "Jessie, my followers will gather in Bethany tomorrow. We must begin our journey to Jerusalem."

White faced, Jessie blurted, "Jerusalem! So soon?"

"Will you come with us? There will be other women traveling with our group. Some of those will need the attunement I gave you. Will you come and pass it to them? Will you hold the energy for me?"

Jessie's heart pounded. Like Yeshua, she knew what lay ahead. After spending these days with him, could she watch him suffer? Watch him die? Swallowing the huge lump in her throat, she saw the love in his eyes and gave the only answer she could.

"Yes, I will come."

Morning arrived too soon for Jessie. Goodbyes had never been her strong point. Rebecca placed a comb, food and a water bag into a woven satchel and handed it to Jessie.

"I think I somehow knew you would not stay with us long, but I have enjoyed your company. You must follow your heart and go where you must." Her voice broke. Tears fell as she embraced her friend. "I will miss you."

"And I you," Jessie replied. The older boys each hugged her in turn.

Looking around the room, Rebecca asked, "Where's Benjamin?"

"He ran off toward the river," replied Aaron.

"Take my things to Mary's home please, Daniel," Jessie requested, folding her good gown and head cloth and placing them in the bag. "Tell Yeshua I will be there soon." The boy nodded and Jessie set out toward the river.

From his perch in the tree, Benjamin saw Jessie come over the hill. It was not fair! He had found her and now she was going away! Tears ran down his face.

"Benjie," Jessie called softly.

"Why are you leaving?" the boy wept.

"I am needed in Jerusalem," she answered quietly, looking up through the branches.

"I don't want you to go," he protested.

"I know. I will miss you too." Jessie held out her arms. Benjamin scrambled down and ran to her, hugging her tightly. After a moment, he stepped back, wiped his face on his sleeve and took her hand. One last time, they walked to the village together.

Yeshua had also made his farewells. Hoisting his carry bag over one shoulder, he handed Jessie hers and they joined the group waiting by the well. He had told his closest friends what truly lay ahead, but few had believed him.

The trip to Jerusalem became a blur to Jessie, recorded by her crystal, but not by her conscious mind. Countless throngs of people gathered along the way, all wanting something from Yeshua—healing, teaching, blessing. He refused no one. Jessie did what she could, channeling extra energy to him, instructing the few women who were ready to receive the attunement, trying to make sure he ate and rested. Some nights they stayed with friends in a village, but most were spent in the fields near the road.

Jessie longed for a bath, but settled for a quick splash of water and a drop or two of myrrh. Twice she had massaged Yeshua's feet when they had stopped for the night. The first time, she had received criticism from one of his followers for wasting costly perfumed oil. Yeshua had quietly reprimanded the man and no one had bothered her after that.

By the time they reached Jerusalem, Jessie was exhausted and knew that Yeshua must be even more so. She took no joy in his triumphant entry, knowing the crowds that now sang his praises would soon cry out for his death. Instead of palm branches cast before him, they would hurl curses and spit upon him. Yeshua knew this too, and still smiled, accepting their homage as calmly as he would later accept their blows.

After the crowds had thinned and his followers had gone to seek lodging, Yeshua took Jessie to meet his mother. Leaving the women to talk, he went into the small garden to meditate.

"I'm glad you are here for him," Mary began, setting fruit, bread and cheese next to the water jug on the table. Jessie looked at the woman. How could she be so calm? Mary sat and took Jessie's hands into her own. Awakened brown eyes met with blue. Understanding flowed between them. Understanding of their love for this man, for the choice he had made, for his task ahead.

"Go to him, Jessie. Let him know you will be there for him. His heart is heavy, but he is resolved to see this through."

Taking a plate of food and a cup of water, Jessie stepped into the garden. Flowering plants perfumed the air, bees droning as they gathered the nectar. Centering her energy, Jessie walked slowly to where Yeshua sat, his back to her. For once, he seemed unaware of her presence. Then she overheard his words.

"Creator, keep me always in your light. The veil resists and darkness seeks to enshroud me. Soon my time comes. Give me strength to endure, strength to anchor the light of your love. Do not let me fail, for darkness would rule and all would be lost." His voice caught as he whispered, "I feel so alone."

Tears flooded Jessie's eyes. Setting the food on a stone bench, she went to Yeshua. Placing her hands on his shoulders, she allowed her aura to expand, its

light filling the garden, its love flowing through them both. Softly, she promised, "I will never leave you nor forsake you. Come what may, I will hold the energy."

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Like sand pouring from a broken hourglass, the days fled until only one remained. Energy was shifting, dark forces gathering, the ravenous maw reaching for the light to devour it whole.

On that final day, Jessie spent her last coin on a bath. After an hour of hot steam and cool water, she emerged smelling of myrrh, wearing the clothing Rebecca had given her. Hair usually confined to a braid flowed freely down her back.

Wandering through the marketplace, she found a gift for Yeshua and parted with most of her precious oil blend to purchase it. Satisfied, she returned to help Mary prepare the Passover meal.

Yeshua, too, had been busy. Earlier that morning, he had helped his followers locate a room large enough to hold all who would celebrate Passover with him tonight. The women would bring the food and together all would enjoy a final time of fellowship. After that—he pushed those thoughts from his mind and submerged himself in the cool waters of the bath.

Returning later that afternoon, Yeshua greeted the women as he passed through the house and into the garden. On the stone bench lay Jessie's gift. Slowly he unfolded the garment and held it up. The pale beige tunic was finely woven and almost seamless—a celebration of light and life. With a smile, he pulled his old garment off and slipped the new one on before entering into his meditation. Confining the brilliance of his aura to the boundaries of the garden, Yeshua allowed the power and love of the creator to flow through him, washing away any possible residual of resistance he may have toward his task, becoming a clear and present channel for the light.

Inside the house, the women paused in their labors and basked in the glorious energy.

In the city, the minions of darkness also felt the shift. Reaching out to the minds of those they controlled, they stirred them to action.

That evening as the guests began to arrive, Peter took Yeshua aside and confided, "I forgot to hire a servant to do the foot washing."

"I will take care of it," Yeshua answered. Walking back downstairs, he borrowed a basin and drying cloths from the innkeeper. Returning to the room, he knelt and began washing the feet of his guests.

"Why do you do a servant's work?" one of the men asked.

Yeshua raised his eyes and answered softly, "Never believe you are better than those who serve you. All who choose the light are forever in the service of the creator and thus to mankind."

As the ceremonial meal drew to a close, Yeshua once again tried to explain what would soon take place and why. Some stared mutely. Others protested that he would be safe among them. Only a few understood. Yeshua simply smiled and quietly stated,

“There is one among you who will this night hand me over to those who will do the bidding of the darkness.”

Anxious, questioning eyes darted from face to face. *Who? Who would stoop so low?*

Suddenly Judas got up and ran from the room. The uneasy silence that followed was broken by Yeshua’s words.

“Do not judge him. He is fulfilling an agreement made before this incarnation. Someone had to betray me. He volunteered. Most of you, however, will desert me. You will scatter like sheep before wolves when I am taken.”

“Not I, Yeshua! Let them come. I will defend you to the death,” Peter boasted loudly.

Yeshua gave a small sigh and fixed Peter with his gaze.

“I wish that was so, Peter, but the truth is you will deny that you even know me at all.”

“Never!” Peter protested.

Yeshua closed his eyes and slowly shook his head. Quietly, he continued. “Before the sun rises, Peter, you will deny me not once, but three times.”

The burly fisherman’s shoulders slumped, his head bowed.

Taking the wine cup and one of the flat bread cakes, Yeshua looked at those gathered in the room. “Passover is a celebration in memory of an ancient time when life emerged from death, when light overcame darkness. Tonight, this conflict arises yet again and I am grateful for all of you—no matter what your role in my task. In the future, whenever you eat or drink, take a moment to reflect and renew your commitment to the light.”

Sending a wave of pure love to all present, Yeshua placed a small piece of the bread into his mouth, took a sip of wine and passed the rest to the next person. Each, in turn, did the same. Tears sprang to Jessie’s eyes for she knew he would neither eat nor drink again until his task was done. Yeshua had already explained to her that he would not take the myrrh drink offered to the condemned. He could not afford to have his wits dulled even slightly if the light was to be fully anchored.

Jessie glanced at the women and at John, each slowly nodding once. Their auras linked, weaving an invisible yet tangible shield, raising the energy they would now hold until the end. All looked to Yeshua as his aura joined theirs, the light of the creator shining from his eyes.

“It is time,” he announced calmly. One by one, he embraced his friends. When he came to Jessie, he whispered, “Take the women and wait with my mother. I will send John for you.”

Although her inner being screamed that she would come with him, would even fight to keep him safe, she only nodded and hugged him fiercely. “We will hold the energy,” she murmured in promise.

Mary knew the moment her son was taken. Jessie, too, felt the shock wave as darkness hurled itself against their shield. John would come for them soon. Jessie swallowed hard. The story she had known for years and had heard many times was now unfolding in stark reality. Although her heart would break and her very soul be laid bare to witness his suffering, Jessie vowed that the energy would not be breached. Yeshua would succeed.

And so they held the energy—channeled it to Yeshua’s physical self so it could withstand the awful tortures inflicted upon it. Channeled so his pure love could ever shine. Channeled through the scourging, so vicious that torn muscle showed through the latticed, bloodstained flesh. Channeled through the searing fire of long spikes being driven through wrists and feet one deliberate blow at a time. Channeled through exhaustion and dehydration—blood and sweat dripping, pooling, soaking into the hard dry ground. Channeled as spasming muscles struggled to raise the body, relieving the chest pressure long enough to grasp for the air needed to speak—to forgive, to assure, to love. Always that endless love shining from his eyes. Loving, forgiving, accepting eyes in a face battered and bloodied almost beyond recognition. And now that he had anchored the light and was ready to return to the creator of all, his life force pushed them away—a gentle nudge—enough to let them know their task was also done. Weeping from the depths of their souls, they grounded the energy and watched as his essence of pure love shed the tattered human form and transcended.

Such power was released as Yeshua moved between worlds that the very earth realigned. In the Jewish temple, the heavy veil to their most sacred place was ripped from top to bottom by unseen hands. As this symbol of old paradigms and beliefs was rent, so was the veil between this dimension and the next torn asunder.

For three days, the energy was in flux, the spirit world mingling with the physical. Those thought long dead freely walked the earth. Many of the living were frightened and hid in terror. Then, from beyond, the creator touched the flow and order was restored.

Three days, three miserable, impossibly long days crawled by. Anxious days filled with hope and longing. In her soul, Jessie knew Yeshua would return, but that did not make the waiting easier. His ruined body had been removed from the cross, hastily washed, wrapped and buried in a borrowed tomb before sundown. The women were concerned that the linens had not been properly imbued with myrrh and spices, but Jessie had convinced them to wait. Roman soldiers presently guarded the stone that covered the entrance to the tomb—a stone so heavy

that several women together could not move it. Wait, she had said, wait for a miracle she had assured them would happen.

And it did.

As the sun began to rise, energy ripped through the dimensions once again, shuddering the earth as it concentrated inside the tomb. Groaning as if in protest, the stone snapped the official Roman seals and rolled away from the entrance, coming to rest like a flat dish on the ground below. Blinding light emanated from the interior of the tomb, so deeply terrifying the highly trained soldiers that even the threat of death at the hands of their superiors could not hold them in place. Flinging their weapons aside, they fled.

Beings of pure light energy now stood one on either side of the opening, their auras sending waves of love to push back any remnants of darkness that may still be lurking nearby.

Jessie felt the energy shift, felt the call of his aura. Quietly she slipped from the house and ran to the tomb. Although aware of the light beings, her attention was instantly drawn to the third form. She watched as its energy shimmered, winking in and out of physical reality. Watched as Yeshua appeared before her. As she reached out to him, he telepathically commanded, *"No. Do not touch me yet, Jessie."*

"Why?"

"I still need to step down this energy so people can see me."

"I can see you."

"You are awakened."

Jessie watched the aura stabilize, his body become more solid.

"You are whole again," she marveled.

"To your eyes," he replied. *"To all others I appear like so."* Scars formed in his wrists, feet and side.

"Why?"

"So they will recognize me. They need to see that it is truly I and not a ghost. Some will need to touch my wounds before they believe. Others will only know me when I lower my vibration even further by eating."

"You are the same and yet, somehow, different," Jessie observed.

Yeshua smiled. *"I am newly come from the presence of the creator. This body I have chosen walks between dimensions with ease."*

Jessie suddenly laughed. *"So that's how you will surprise your followers who have locked themselves inside a room."*

Merriment entered his eyes. *"Yes,"* he admitted.

"So what now?" Jessie asked.

Yeshua stepped forward and wrapped his arms around her. *"You return to your time,"* he answered gently. Her heart sank.

"I don't want to go back. There is nothing for me there," she protested.

"You are awake now," he reminded. *"In the past, you linked your life with*

those who were also asleep, with those who did not see or understand. Instead, choose now from those who are awake so you may live in spiritual harmony and work to awaken others."

"But . . . I will miss you," she wept, holding him tightly.

"And I you. In a short while, I will also leave this time thread."

"Take me with you."

"I cannot," he smiled regretfully. "There are decisions you must soon make alone, but remember that I am with you always, Jessie—to the ends of the earth, of time, of eternity for I am a part of you as you are a part of me."

His aura shifted and became brighter as his physical self dissolved from her arms. The light began to swirl, to become iridescent, to surround her, to lift her consciousness higher and higher . . .

And she was once again in the cavern of black crystal.

"Greetings, Awakened One."

"Greetings, Guardian," Jessie replied, her emotions raw with the pain of separation.

"There are choices to be made."

"Choices?"

"Although you must return, you may retain the body used for your journey or you may choose another more to your liking."

Jessie thought a moment and then answered, *"I've grown used to this form, so I guess I'll keep it. My crystal stays with me, too,"* she added, *"and the memories it carries."*

"Agreed."

Silence.

"What else?" she prompted.

"To which thread of your time will you return?"

Running her hands through her hair, Jessie looked at the pulsing light.

"You choose, Guardian. Choose whatever is for my greatest good. Choose the thread in which I may best serve the creator."

The blue light began to whirl with magenta fire.

"As you wish," it replied as the cavern disappeared.

Wisps of consciousness drifted lazily through Jessie's mind. The floor beneath the quilts was hard, her body stiff from lack of movement. With a soft groan, she stretched, forcing blood to flow more quickly through her limbs. Yawning, she realized that the fire was still burning. Her returning awareness also sensed a presence in the darkened room, yet she was strangely unafraid.

"Good journey?" The deep voice was like liquid silk. Rolling to her side, Jessie tried to sit up, but fell back.

"Not so fast. You've been gone for hours. Open your circle and I'll help you

up.”

Still disoriented, Jessie grounded the protective light and grasped the strong male hand that reached over her crystals. Firelight cast flickering shadows on the tall, lightly bearded form.

“Yeshua?” she whispered hopefully as he lifted her to her feet. Disappointed, Jessie’s heart sank as her gaze met eyes as deep blue as her own, saw the flowing golden brown hair tied back with a leather thong, the blue flannel shirt open at the throat, the faded jeans. But then, he smiled and gathered her into his arms.

“I believe it’s pronounced *Joshua* in this time thread.”

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Jessie lay down her pen and read what she had written in her journal.

The time for physical sacrifice is past. This planet and its people are stirring. My task is to carry the message of pure love, to aid the awakening in whatever way I choose. I have been shown the way and the truth so I might live this life and all others abundantly, fully and without fear—so I might simply BE. And as for who I am—I AM—and that is all that matters.

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Jessie Traynor, burned out and disillusioned with life, decides to seek spiritual guidance. During her shamanic journey, she meets the guardian of the portal who sends her into an encounter that transforms her forever.